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To the Right Honourable, the LORDS Spiritual and  
Temporal, and to the Honourable, the Commons  
in PARLIAMENT Assembled.

The most Humble Supplication and Address of the poor Prisoners of  
*England* for Debt

*Sheweth,*

**T**Hat whereas the additional Act of Grace, as it passed the House of Commons, would have answered his Majesties Gracious Intentions, and the longing Expectations of many Thousands of miserable Prisoners and their Families, yet by reason of the Alterations and their Additional Clauses added to the Bill, there can but few, and those inconsiderable receive any Relief from the great Grace and Mercy thereby intended, since none that are in Prison upon Execution for above two hundred Pounds are left capable thereof; When there are at least two hundred Prisoners in the Common-side of the *Kings-Bench*, and other Prisons in and about the City of *London*, that have nothing to preserve them from perishing, but the Charity sent them by well disposed People, and what they beg for through the Grates, who are charged some with 300 pound, some with 500 *l.* and so upwards to a 1000, and more upon Execution, though their real Debts are inconsiderable, and though many of them were ruined by the woful Conflagration of the City of *London*, and others by losses at Sea: Yet such is the Cruelty of their Adversaries as to keep them still in this miserable Condition wherein they have already languished, some five, some eight, and some more years, and if the Bill should pass as now it is, they would be left past all hopes of ever being released.

May it Therefore please the Right Honourable House of Peers, and the Honourable House of Commons, to take the lamentable Condition of your poor Supplicants into your Noble and Tender Considerations, and of your great Charity and Goodness to cause the said Alterations and Clauses to be omitted in the said Bill, That so they may at length receive the benefit and Relief most Graciously Intended them by his Sacred Majesty, and his Majesty have a great Number of these his poor Subjects to serve him (in his Wars) upon their Enlargement, who must otherwise continue to languish and utterly perish with their numerous Families.

*And your poor Supplicants (as in duty bound) shall ever pray, &c.*

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*It is most Humbly offered for passing the Bill, according as it was sent up  
by the House of Commons.*

1. That it is highly Charitable and Reasonable, that the Bodies of Debtors that are really Indigent now in Prison should be discharged: and that those Indigent Prisoners that lye for great sums, are in as great Distress as those for smaller: for he that owes 1000 pound or more, and hath not 20 shillings, in the World to pay it, is in as much need (if not more) to be discharged by an Act of Grace, as he that owes not 100 pound, and hath not ten groats to discharge it. The smaller by some means or other may have hopes to get out, but the greater can have no hopes ever to get out but by Grace and Favour and by this woful Experience is testified, by the many years that many Debtors have been confined already for great sums.

2. To discharge our Debtor that is not worth 10 *l.* and owes 100 *l.* or 200 *l.* and to hold another confined that is not worth 10 pound, because he owes 1000 pound. It is humbly submitted to consideration, whether the Case be not the same as to disability, and the Condition and Distress of the persons the same, and consequently Objects of Mercy and Compassion alike: Especially since there is a Proviso in the Bill as much to the Creditors reasonable satisfaction as can be made. *Viz.* That if by Liberty the Debtor becomes capable to pay, the Creditor hath power and Privilege to extend.

As to the Proviso now added to the Bill, that the Prisoners should be put to Work in a Working House for two years and the half of their hier to go to their Creditors towards payment of their Debts. It is humbly conceived that it will neither answer the Intent of the Bill in amending the Condition of the poor Prisoners, nor pay any of their Debts.

For first, there are not Working Houses in *England* that will contain the tenth part of the poor Prisoners.

And secondly, for those that are, they are erected chiefly for the beating of Hemp, and the Woollen and Linnen Manufacture, and most of these are *Bridewells* for putting Malefactors and Vagabonds to Work, and not for Debtors. And those that are put there to Work cannot generally earn above 5 pence or 6 pence a day, which will not buy them Victuals and pay for their Lodging, not mentioning Cloaths, Washing and other Necessaries, without which they cannot long subsist. And in this condition there will not be one penny for payment of their Creditors: And besides, by this means they will be enforced to run away beyond Sea to get a Livelyhood, to the Depopulating of the Kingdom, whereas otherwise those that are released and are capable of Working might apply themselves to those Trades or Professions they were brought up to, and so in time might recover themselves, through Gods blessing, to some competent subsistence: for generally most of the Handicraftsmen in and about *London* can get some 2 *s.* some 2 *s.* 6 *d.* some 3 *s.* and others more by the day, which would be a comfortable maintenance to themselves and Families, and afford something towards payment of their Debts: but if confined to Working-Houses, their Wives and Children must beg for Bread, and increase the Charge of the several Parishes, the miserable persons themselves being as incapable of affording them help, as when they were in Prison. As

As for Working-Houses, there have been two Erected in the Parishes of *St. Martins*, in the *Fields*, and *St. Margarets Westminster*, upon which the Masters of the said Parishes laid out great summs of money, expecting that great profit and advantage would have accrued by keeping the poor at work there; but the contrary hath been found evident by experience: for they have proved a great Loss to the said Parishes, and not at all answered the Ends proposed by the Designers of them: and upon computing of their Weekly-work, they found the Charge amounted to more than the Profit of the Work-mens Labour.

A List of the Names of those poor miserable Prisoners in the Common-side of the *Kings-Bench* and *Fleet*, (besides those in *Ludgate*) which are numerous and would be too tedious to insert, with the Summs for which they are charged, and the time of their Imprisonment, and who are really Indigent and reduced to that great extremity, that they are forced to beg through the Grates, and depend on the Charity of well disposed People to keep them from starving who will be still left in the same Misery and inevitably Perish without the compassionate Mercy and Relief of both Houses extend to them.

	Execution lb	Actions lb	The time of their Imprisonment. Years		Execution lb	Actions lb	The time of their Imprisonment. Years
John Toy	- 600	- 400	- - - 07	Roger Simpson	- - -	- 1500	- - - 03
George Cole	- 110	- 400	- - - 05	Jarvis Potter	- 200	- 1000	- - - 03
John Green	- 300	- 1000	- - - 04	John Ferth	- 113	- 150	- - - 02
Roger Welsh	- 420	- 3000	- - - 05	Tho. Brackly	- 670	- 100	- - - 06
Zechariah Ives	- 300	- - -	- - - 04	Tho. Loving	- 200	- 250	- - - 09
John Hawes	- 250	- - -	- - - 02	John Tayler	- 600	- - -	- - - 03
John Diggins	- 130	- 1300	- - - 04	Sam. Moon	- 2000	- - -	- - - 02
Fra. Goddard	- 160	- 100	- - - 03	Luke Allen	- 300	- - -	- - - 1½
Wm. Tayler	- 250	- - -	- - - 03	James Cole	- 140	- 200	- - - 03
Wm Rookwood	- 1000	- - -	- - - 04	John Turner	- 500	- - -	- - - 03
James Swanson	- 150	- 80	- - - 04	W. Springett	- - -	- 500	- - - 03
John Plat	- 200	- 400	- - - 05	John Wordell	- 1000	- - -	- - - 04
Jacob Ardes	- - -	- 1200	- - - 05	Rob. Spencer	- 30	- 200	- - - 04

In the Wards of the *Fleet* Prison.

Edw. Green	- 412	- 510	- - - 03	William Gibson	- 160	- 170	- - - 01
Richard Marler	- - -	- 540	- - - 01	Stephen Jay	- 42	- 385	- - - 06
Geo. Lamplow	- 400	- 100	- - - 04	Rich. Pettipher	- 420	- 830	- - - 8½
John Wells	- - -	- 800	- - - 02	Jo. Billinghamst	- 20	- 1500	- - - 10
Tho. Stone	- 400	- 400	- - - 04	Rich. Rochdale	- 150	- 1224	- - - 3½
Cadw. Edwards	- 1300	- - -	- - - 03				

And for a confirmation of the truths above mentioned: If both or either of these two Honorable Houses shall be pleased to cause the Marshal of the *Kings Bench* and Warden of the *Fleet*, to be examined, touching the Particulars of the Miserable Condition of us herein named; of our begging through the Grates, and our wholly depending upon Charity, &c. though we are informed the said Marshal and Warden have been evil Instruments against us, and employed their Agents abroad to obstruct our enlargement, and the Grace and Favour intended us by this Bill, yet they cannot deny the truth of these our Allegations. But to our great sorrow we are sensible that most of the Gaolers of *England*, as well as Creditors, would rather have the poor Prisoners lye and Rott and Starve, than to lose the getting of one groat by their Enlargement: and for our further Misery, the Common side of the *Kings Bench* consists onely of four Cellars, in one whereof containing but 16 foot long and 12 foot wide, there are at this time confined to lodg in that sad small damp hole no fewer than 24 persons; and so proportionably in the other Cellars.

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